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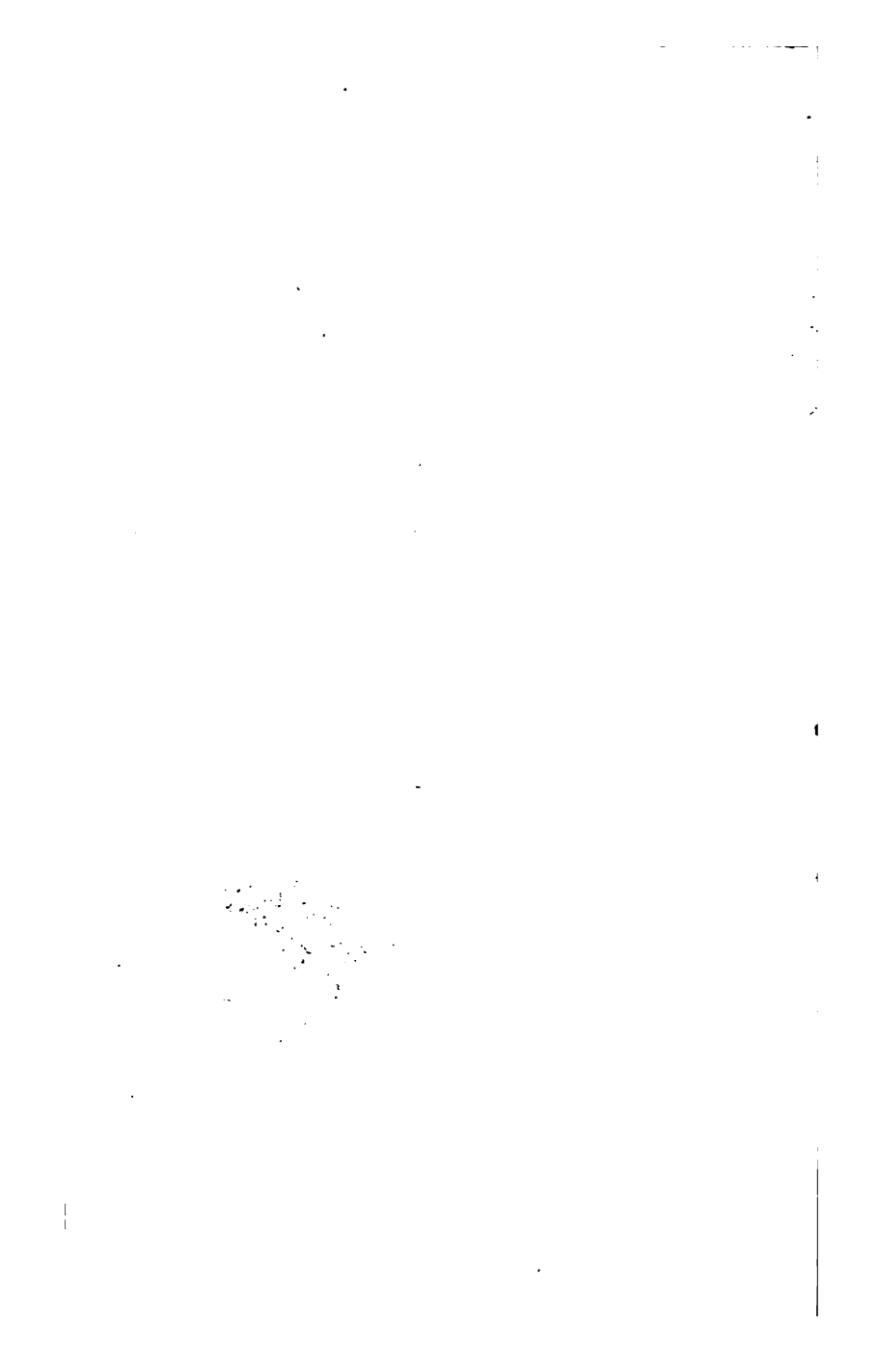
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ANNO MUNDI 1656,

AND

ANNO DOMINI 1849.

BY

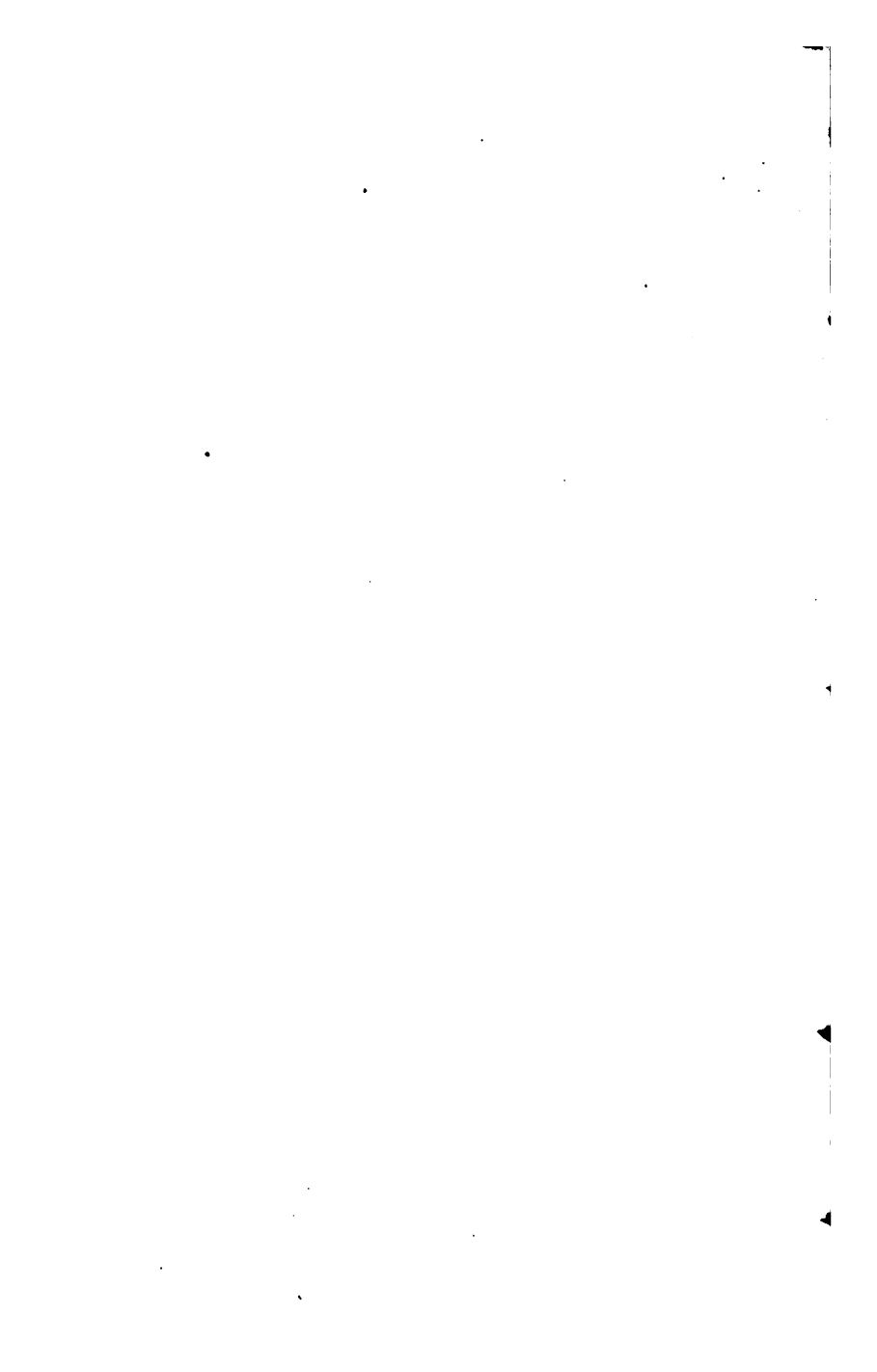
JOHN GRIFFITH MANSFORD.



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MDCCCXLIX.



PREFACE.

It will doubtless appear to many scarcely less than impertinent, in the midst of the stirring events of the times, and the multitudinous and ever-increasing demands on time and attention, to obtrude so stale and unwelcome a subject as the coming of the Lord: a less appropriate and more unwelcome one, indeed, strange as the combination sounds, could scarcely be offered to the notice of both the world and the church. But each has its particular reasons for passing it by, and, with the exception of a voice raised here and there, not a sound is heard to indicate that such an event can, by any possibility, be near, or that the scriptural intimations and warnings respecting it, at all concern the present generation.

In the midst of these discouragements—of the world's turmoil and the church's apathy, in pur-

suance of an intention some time since expressed, of calling, by occasional short and rousing appeals, as God might spare and enable him, attention to this increasingly-important though neglected subject—the author, with grateful acknowledgments to Him who has condescended to make use of so unworthy an instrument, and in entire dependence on His blessing, offers this further contribution to that end.

The form of dialogue suggested itself as varying and enlivening a not generally inviting subject, and as possessing, in a controversial one, increased facilities for the better statement of the argument, and the clearer and more pointed management of objections and replies.

It is also with the same view of enlivening his subject, and of relieving it in some degree from the tedium of common-place, that the author takes his reader backwards for the counterpart to the prevailing apathy of the present generation, on one special form of truth, to the generation before the Flood. This, and the events of our day, so admonitory of the signs of the latter times, and

not the desire of straining the parallelism beyond its just limits, nor the affectation of fixing dates, the besetting sin of too many prophetic commentators, furnish the reasons for associating the present year with the year of the Flood:—bearing this in mind—that though no man can say that this, or the next, or any other, is the year of the advent, so no man can say that it may not be;—that the year, the day, the hour, may be at the very doors; and that, come when it will, it will take an unexpected world by surprise, as a thief in the night:—bearing this also in mind, that if it be presumption to determine the times and the seasons, which are known only unto God, God himself has given us numbers, from which to calculate their near approach; while the predicted signs of the same eventful epoch thicken around us, and bear their testimony to the justice of our conclusions. And if the parallel thus drawn between the two epochs be not perfect, which of course it cannot be, it may be found to be more so than has ever struck some thoughtless people; while it furnishes deeper and more expansive

materials for meditation and alarm than could otherwise be brought into use in a form so limited.

The author's object in this little essay is not proselytism to a particular set of opinions. It is a matter of comparative indifference, whether the reader of this, or any other production of his, becomes a convert to the various items of belief which are generally supposed to be contained in the vague term, *Millenarianism*. But there is one on which all the rest must depend, of præeminent importance, not as the basis of a system only, but as of the highest practical tendency—the *PÆ-MILLENNIAL ADVENT*. It is this which—if the reiterated words of Scripture are to be taken in their plain and most obvious meaning—is presented to us, not as a question, but as a fact:—it is to this, as given, in the words of our Lord himself, that the author would once more call attention; trusting, if spared, to resume the subject, on a more extended scale of Scripture evidence, on a future occasion.

This is not, indeed, a time for the watchman

to be off his post, or silent on it. The events of centuries, crowded into a single year, admonish us that a crisis in the world's history is at hand; while the prophetic land-marks, with which the Scriptures supply us, point to both the steps and stages and the terrible things of this crisis, and the near approach of Him, in whose hands are its issues. Since the publication of the Author's last Tract,* in May of last year, the "Frog Spirits," whose commission it was the chief design of that Tract to exhibit, have made rapid strides towards the completion of their work; and the world seems ripening apace for the terrors of "that great day of God Almighty." If the sudden overthrow of the French monarchy, and the irruption of revolutionary principles, rushing, as a sweeping torrent, over the nations, startled the repose of Europe in the early months of the last year,—the heaving surges of the same restless flood,—the note of internecine war coming up from the East and the West, the North and the South,—the advance to the scene of future international war,

* The Sixth Seal and the Seventh Vial.

of the Scythic hosts of the "Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal,"—and, above all, the events which have transpired, and are still transpiring, in the very seat of the Beast,—the *fons et origo* of all the spiritual ills that have afflicted Christendom for 1200 years:—these all shew that the events of our day are advancing with rapid strides to their consummation, and admonish us to wait and watch as those whose loins are girded about, and their lights burning.

"THE BROW," COMBE DOWN, BATH; June, 1849.

ANNO MUNDI 1656.



Enos. Where have you been, Jared? We have lost you of late.

Jared. I have been down to Larach, where I had not been these hundred years before.

Enos. I hope you have enjoyed yourself?

Jared. If I have not, it was my own fault. Truly there is enough of spectacle and revelry there to satisfy the most voracious pleasure-hunter; and you may believe I did not find myself in the great city after so fatiguing a journey without taking my fill—*fêtes*, processions, reviews, theatres, mysteries, gladiatorship, betrothings and weddings, in never-ceasing succession. But there was one sight which I hazard your ridicule in confessing interested me more than all the rest.

Enos. Pray, what was that?

Jared. That to be seen about half-a-day's journey from Larach—old Noah, and his ark, as he calls it; a huge thing ten times as big as all the ships in the world put together. This monster edifice, which looks fit for neither land nor water,

is building, or indeed is built, on a piece of sandy ground on the east of the city, to which the crazed old man verily believes the sea, or some other water, will come at his calling to float it. All round the space in the centre of which the ark stands, are sheds and stalls for every animal you ever heard of, and many you never did hear of, waiting to be marched, rank and file, mate with mate, into their wooden den; and, it must be confessed, that their keeper has given tolerable security for their good behaviour during their long voyage to the next world. Incredulity itself must be staggered at such an apparent miracle as here presents itself. I could scarcely believe my eyes, when passing hastily round this novel menagerie, I stumbled on a lion simply tied to his stall by a halter, and eating out of the same manger with an ass. But the most curious sight of all was the patient old man himself: who, through a hundred and twenty years of every description of taunt and scoff, and frequently of attempted violence, has pursued from day to day his work and his warnings. There he stood, just as I had seen him a hundred years before, and, as is his wont, at a certain hour every day, denouncing the wickedness of the age, and proclaiming the still coming flood: in the certainty of which no lapse of time seems to shake his confidence. Every seventh day he goes to Larach,

and there, in the great square of *Ophel*,* from the very steps of the temple itself, unwearied by repetition, and undismayed by insult, he proclaims to jeering multitudes his denunciations and his prophecies. The words which now caught my ear, as I stood with some 200 or 300 others, beneath the shadow of the towering ark, were these:—"Yet thirty days, and the windows of heaven will be opened, and the fountains of the abyss will be broken up, and the waters will rise on the earth and overwhelm every living thing and every work of man. Repent, and fly to the ark of refuge: the door is yet open, but e'er a month has passed will be shut, and the day of mercy

* It is not necessary to contend for the practice of idolatry by the antediluvians. Their total departure from God, and unmixed wickedness; its rise so quickly after the deluge; and the fact that man in his apostate state, in every age and country, has adopted it, may be considered as nearly conclusive on the subject; while the names and rites of the principal deities may have been preserved and transmitted by the sons of Noah, especially by Ham; in whose family the first great scheme of postdiluvian idolatry was set up. Amongst these deities, if our opinion be correct, the early and universal prevalence of postdiluvian serpent-worship would seem to warrant our assigning a high place to that idol, which has even been supposed to date its origin to the circumstances of the fall itself.

Nor is it of much importance to the reader to be informed that *Larach* is given by Berosus, or rather perhaps by his copyers, as an antediluvian city, and made to be the birth-place and regal city of Sisuthrus, or Noah.

closed for ever." As these words were uttered, a missile flung at the venerable speaker, but which passed harmless by him, raised a shout of derision in which his last words were drowned.

Enos. I wonder the old fool has not had his head knocked off before this.

Jared. It has not been for want of will; but, somehow or other, no designs against him have prospered. It is now fifty or sixty years ago that a party of *Nephilim** undertook to despatch him, and to set fire to his ship and all the multifarious paraphernalia of his mock dockyard. But, instead

* Various have been the conjectures of who the people thus denominated were: the term itself implying simply *fallen* men, or beings of some kind, gives little information. Our translators, following the Septuagint, call them "giants"—a term of not much clearer import: there being not less than six other terms so rendered from the Hebrew Scriptures. Amongst other hypotheses which have been entertained respecting these Nephilim, is that of their being the offspring of a preternatural intercourse between angels (who thus violated their trust and fell from their high estate) and women, and that they were thus endowed with more than the ordinary measure both of human power and human wickedness. In pursuance of this hypothesis, they have been further conjectured to have been the originals of the Titans of ancient mythology. Whoever they were, the way in which they are mentioned appears to signalize them as peculiar to the age in which they lived, and as preëminent in the violence and wickedness which characterised it. The reader will find some curious remarks on this subject in a work entitled *Eruvin*, by the Rev. S. R. Maitland.

of their fire touching him, or any thing of his, fire from heaven slew five of their number, and the rest, terrified, abandoned their project; and, since then, an opinion has prevailed, that the old man, fanatic as he is, is a charmed individual, and that it is safest to let him alone. And, indeed, notwithstanding my prepossessions, I could not contemplate his venerable figure, and listen to his solemn voice, without a feeling of respect and awe.

Enos. Hallo, Jared! what is coming to you now? Verily, you have not been to Larach for nothing.

Jared. You mistake me, Enos. I am not apologising for this arkite delusion. A delusion it must be. But, in spite of my convictions, I cannot get rid of the figure of the patriarch: nor have his awful words ceased to sound in my ears—"Yet thirty days, and the windows of heaven will be opened, and the fountains of the abyss broken up."

Enos. Stay, Jared. No more of this. You will make us as great fools as your patriarch himself soon. Depend upon it, the next time you go to Larach, if the farce should last so long, he will get you into his ark, and keep you safe, to help people his new world, when we are all food for fishes.

Jared. Do not be afraid. I am not likely to

see him or his ark again; but I may have a worse fate than that after all. "Yet thirty days"—How could I help thinking on these words when I awoke this morning with the recollection, that this is the last of the thirty days: when I saw the sun rise bright and clear as ever, but soon disappear behind clouds of unusual aspect, and as I walked along towards your house, and watched the heavens grow more and more overcast, and big drops begin to fall, the "Yet thirty days" rung again and again—and louder and louder—in my ears, till, as I reached your dwelling, abating rain and returning light, as I flattered myself, restored my composure, and dissipated my alarm, for the time.

Enos. Why what alarm are you talking of? Is heavy rain, or a dark day, anything uncommon at this time of the year? Have not all things gone on the same from the beginning, from our father Adam to this day? You are nervous, Jared. Here, take a goblet of my last years' vintage.

Jared. No, Enos, I am not nervous, and want no cordial. But, as birds and wild animals forecast a storm, or an earthquake, and are said to quail under an unwonted sense of fear, so I confess myself to be at this moment under a strange but indescribable sense of alarm and apprehension of a

coming catastrophe ; and have you not observed that, while we are talking, the darkness is deepening, and the rain falling in increasing torrents ?

Enos. Well, what of that ? Every storm must have an end. Come, do as I recommend you. Here's to—— Hark ! What was that crash ?

Jared. And this rain. You cannot say that you have ever seen anything like this ; and these awful flashes and terrific peals, under which the ground itself trembles.

Enos. Your old prophet is, no doubt, in fine glee just now, if they have this weather down at Larach.

Jared. He will have cause enough to triumph in a few hours of these torrents, without the benefit of your insinuation.

Enos. Perhaps his ark may float this way, and so you may get a berth in it at last, that is, if ever it should float at all.

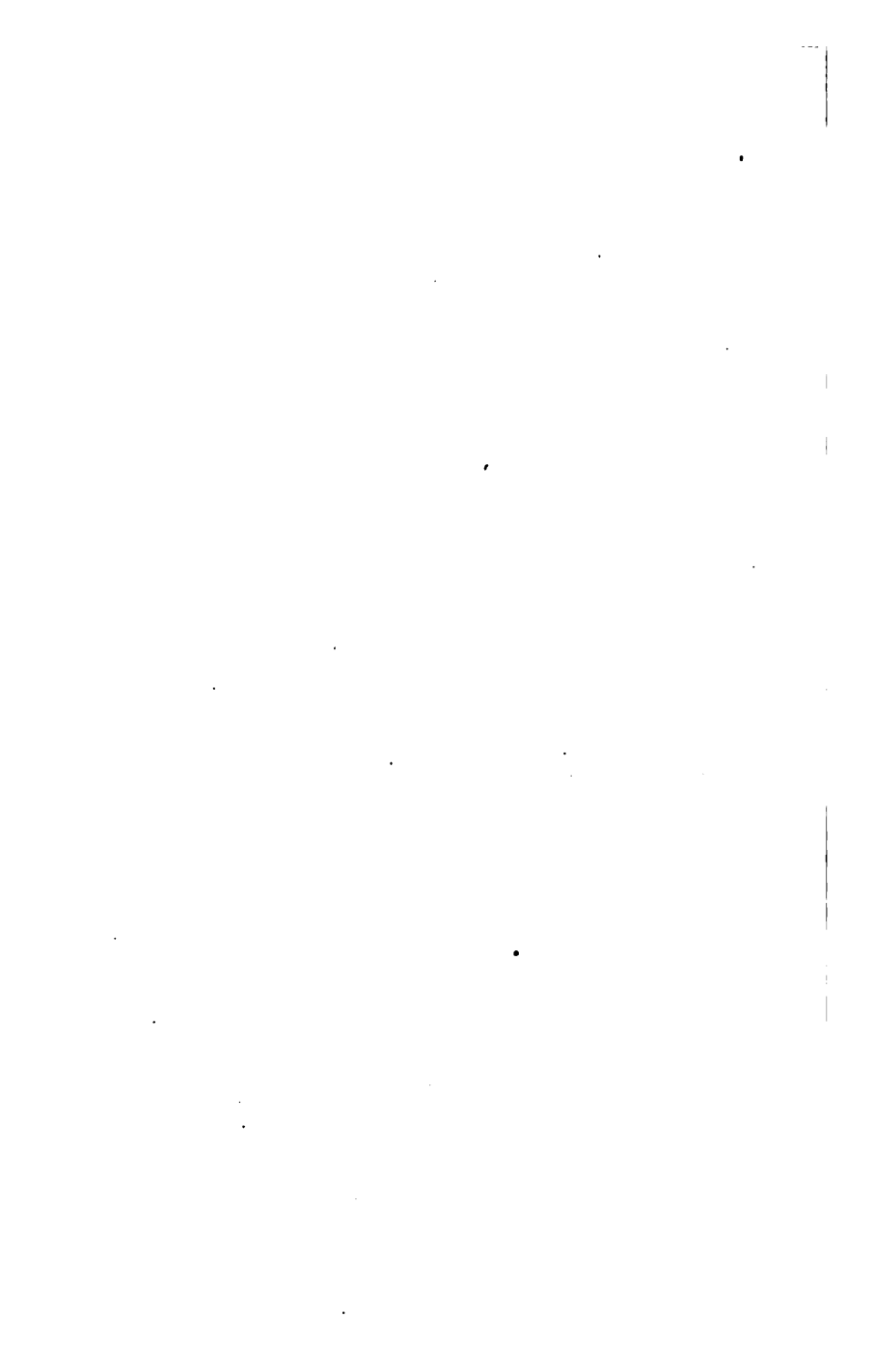
Jared. This is no time for jesting, Enos. Thousands will witness the floating of the ark who will never reach it ; and it is one of the things which, if it did no more, should have secured some respect for both the prophet and his prophecy, that competent judges have given it as their opinion, that this vessel, huge and clumsy as it seems, is built in accordance with the strictest rules of art, and that there is no fear of its floating

as lightly and as steadily as the trimmest boat on the *Phrat*.

Enos. As things begin to look, I wish I was in it, then.

Jared. Your wish and mine are equally vain now, Enos. It is but too plain that our day of grace is past, and we have no one to thank for it but ourselves. Nothing but our own obstinate blindness could have shut our eyes to the supernatural character of that extraordinary man. The astonishing fact of such an assemblage of animals, the most ferocious and untamed, as well as the domestic, collecting around him with so little trouble, and proving as docile in his hands as so many children; and that other equally astonishing fact, of a man, who knew no more of ship-building than you or I, planning and constructing, with the most consummate skill, such a vast and complicate fabric as the ark; were surely enough, if there were nothing else, to convince all, but the wilfully or judicially blind, of the Divine mission of the prophet. And on me the heavier judgment must fall. You have had no misgivings to stifle, but I confess, with useless remorse now, that I have. You did not hear, but I did, the awful words from the mouth of the prophet himself—"Yet thirty days, and the windows of heaven will be opened, and the fountains of the abyss will be broken up." The

day is come. These cataracts from above tell that the windows of heaven are indeed opened, and the rocking earth bespeaks the heavings of the great abyss. We have defied the Almighty: we have mocked his prophet, and laughed at his judgments, and now that our terror cometh, He will laugh at us. O that I had listened to——



ANNO DOMINI 1849.



Gaius. You were not in your seat this morning, *Hermas*.

Hermas. No; I went to hear Mr. D.

Gaius. Who, I suppose, has been dosing you with election.

Hermas. No; I am not certain that he made any mention of election.

Gaius. Millenarianism, then.

Hermas. What, perhaps, you will call Millenarianism; which, I presume, I am to understand as a term of reproach?

Gaius. Yes. But you will permit me to make a distinction between yourself and the subject; and I could even extend a little indulgence to the latter, if it had not broken all terms with me by perverting my friend.

Hermas. I thank you for your consideration. I am in no danger of being elated by your compliment, and am, you may be sure, too familiar with both reproach and raillery to be much disturbed by either.

Gaius. Indeed, I have no disposition to take up either. But I do not well see how you could expect to escape them. When a weak man is proselytized to some scheme of nonsense, no one gives himself any trouble about him: we can at most only pity him. But when such a mind as yours falls before the same delusion, pity must give place to astonishment.

Hermas. Pray, Gaius, (taking your compliment as I presume you intend it,) did it never strike you, that when minds of acknowledged competent powers embrace a doctrine not commonly received, or to them at least new, there may be more in it than the scoffer or the indolent inquirer knows of? and that the fault may be less in the former than in the latter?

Gaius. But Millenarianism! Pardon me, my good friend, what is there in that to redeem it? It appears to me nothing better than a system, if system it can be called, of unmixed nonsense.

Hermas. Everything is nonsense till pains have been taken to understand it. Will you allow me to ask you, if you ever in your life honestly read any treatise on what you term Millenarianism, or anything relating to it.

Gaius. I cannot say that I have. But—

Hermas. My good friend, with such a confession, we will not, if you please, proceed any

farther in that direction. But you have not yet inquired what was the subject of the sermon which led to this conversation.

Gaius. Well, what was it?

Hermas. "Behold, I come as a thief" (Rev. xvi. 15)—a solemn warning to a thoughtless world. I wish you could have heard it.

Gaius. I can understand quite enough of it without hearing it:—the usual cant of the sect, no doubt,—“signs of the times,” “speedy advent,” “end of the world,” “terrible judgments,” and all that. If we were to listen to these alarmists, the world would speedily come to an end, sure enough, from very fright.

Hermas. Compose yourself, my good friend; there is no fear of the world's frightening itself either into or out of its senses, from such causes, at present.

Gaius. Perhaps not; but I have no notion of being constantly harried by these alarmists, and having one's mind unsettled, and one's pursuits, and even one's duties, paralysed, by the expected coming of—

Hermas. Of one, whose coming, to you, at least, would evidently not be welcome. But what if the doctrine proclaimed by these “alarmists” should be true after all?

Gaius. Why, then, I prefer living in ignorance.

If all were to proceed according to your principles, the world would soon stand still: the exchange would be deserted; the bankers might keep their money; the builder might leave his stones in the quarry; and the ship might lie at its moorings. Who would buy, or sell, or build, or care about provision for the future, or political or social improvements, if all were infected with this wild notion of the second advent?

Hermas. Don't alarm yourself. There is no fear of the men of the world, in numbers sufficient to affect its course, or even its outward appearance, being frightened from their pleasures or pursuits by preachings or warnings of any kind; and, as to the Christian, the doctrine can have but one effect on him, namely, that of urging him to greater diligence. The man who cherishes a sense of his responsibility, and the hope of being received by his Judge at his advent with a "well done, good and faithful servant," and who, at the same time, lives under the realizing impression that his time may be short, and his opportunities terminated irrespective of his call by death—is the very man to work while it is day.

Gaius. But you do not mean to say that your preacher's text, taken out of a book admitted by all to be full of symbol and figure, furnishes any injunction to live under such impression.

Hermas. Pray, what then does it furnish?

Gaius. Simply an announcement by God, that what he was then revealing to John in figure should come suddenly and unawares on the generation to whom it applied: just as Christ himself, when on earth, used the same figure to describe his coming in his providence to destroy Jerusalem and to overturn the Jewish church and polity.

Hermas. Passing by for the present the assumption that Christ himself, when on earth, gave an example of speaking of a figurative coming when he spoke of his personal coming, we have ample proof in the Apocalypse itself that when he here speaks of that same event it is as a literal and not a figurative advent. In the first chapter his coming is described as *seen* by every eye: this you will scarcely deny to be a personal advent. And, in the last, the reiterated announcement of "Behold I come quickly," is associated with his having his reward with him, to give to every man according as his work shall be: that this, too, must be a personal coming you will scarcely venture to dispute. His second coming is, indeed, the leading event of the Apocalypse; and the preacher's text is a parenthetical note of warning in the midst of the outpouring of the last vials.

Gaius. Stay, Hermas. You are taking me out of my depth here. I have heard so much about

enthusiasts losing themselves in the Revelation, and leaving their senses behind them, that, I confess, I cannot plead guilty of ever having read it through. I must, therefore, leave you in the enjoyment of all you can make out of it. But, I cannot so quietly give up other scriptures, particularly that which you say is an assumption, namely, that Christ meant his coming in judgment on the Jews when he spoke of his coming.

Hermas. You will see, perhaps, presently, that I stand on firmer ground here, than even in the Scriptures which you give up. There are several reasons which might be adduced to show the inapplicability of this prophecy (Mat. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi.) to the destruction of Jerusalem. One of these will, perhaps, occur to your recollection; and, if there were no other, it is quite sufficient to put aside this imaginary interpretation. You will, perhaps, remember that our Saviour, in the same conversation in which he answers the double question proposed by his disciples, when the predicted destruction of the temple should take place, and what should be the sign of his coming and of the end of the age; having answered the first question, and having warned them against false christs, and the notion of his appearing stealthily, or with public announcement of his being here or there, told

them, in answer to the second, that his coming should be as unknown, as unlooked-for, as sudden, and as swift as the lightning. To apply this simile to a figurative advent in the destruction of Jerusalem, is one of those licentious interpretations which nothing but the stern demands of system could either require or permit. The causes of the war which brought the Roman arms on Jerusalem were long in operation: the armies themselves were not assembled, nor their appointments for a siege completed, in a day; and even after their invasion of the country and first advances on Jerusalem, they once and again receded, affording timely warning, and ample opportunity of escape, to those who had profited by the advice of our Saviour himself in his reply to the first question in that memorable conversation, or who were actuated by the common principles of self-preservation. This was a strange course of events to be illustrated by lightning of all things in the heavens or on the earth.

Gaius. So, indeed, in your hands, it would seem; and I feel, now, what cause I have to regret not being better informed on the whole bearings of the subject, that I might be a little more of a match for you.

Hermas. Yes; but, my good friend, you do not hesitate to condemn, if not openly to scoff at

(as many others have done), a doctrine, of the true merits of which you confess your ignorance. Your case is, indeed, within my knowledge, unhappily, a very common one; and through such, chiefly, it is, that one of the most solemn and awakening appeals to a sleeping world is got rid of, and the church loses what would, perhaps, prove to be its most influential call to watchfulness, sobriety, and exertion.

Gaius. One would suppose from you that the present world was as stupid and incredulous as the antediluvian one, and that its true duties and destinies were known only to a paltry sect.

Hermas. As to the numbers of those who are looking for their Lord's return, if they are comparatively few, this is the very proportion which He himself has foretold; and with respect to your comparison of the state of the present world with that of the old one, when the flood came upon it, it seems to have escaped you that this is another of our Lord's own similes, to illustrate both the suddenness of his coming and the unprepared and unbelieving state of the world at the time of that event—rejecting the warnings of himself and his apostles, as the old world did those of Noah.

Gaius. But you do not surely mean to draw any comparison between the present world and the antediluvian one?

Hermas. I did not mean to do so, except in the one single point of a special form of unbelief. There may be a nearer resemblance, however, than you seem to imagine—a branch of the subject of which, with your permission, I will take some notice, presently. I wish, for a few moments, to keep your attention to the principal features of the simile—suddenness and unexpectedness; the only ones, indeed, which, as regards the event itself, it will bear, notwithstanding the old refuge, the siege of Jerusalem, has been resorted to here also.

Gaius. And why is this refuge to be abandoned?

Hermas. I might ask you, in reply, why you again require me to shew the disagreement of things so incongruous as the instantaneous flash of lightning, and the slow and interrupted advance of the Roman armies on Jerusalem? So now, in the equally incongruous allocation of the same notable and graduated advance, and the sudden and unlooked-for irruption of waters from above and beneath, producing the flood. For, as in the very day that they were thoughtlessly pursuing their usual business and pleasures, “the flood came and took them all away,” “so also shall the coming of the Son of man be.” They had no warning but the long-despised warning of the prophet Noah: so, of His coming, there shall be

no warning but the predictions and signs given by himself and his apostles. If the antediluvians, in addition to the words of the prophet, had the sign of the ark so many years before their eyes, we, besides the far more numerous prophecies relating to the great event of the advent, have building up before our eyes, and increasing in height year by year, a lofty *pharos* of signs, casting its light over the dark waters of the world, for the use of those who will be guided by it.

Gaius. These are few enough at present; and are not likely, I imagine, just yet, to be more. Men have too much to do with the signs of the times, as they are to be consulted from day to day on the exchange, in the funds, in the share markets, in elections, in home and foreign politics, in the news of the day, and in the daily competition and scramble for a share of this world's goods, to pay much attention to the glimmering rays of your *pharos*.

Hermas. Most true. You have, in a few words, well sketched the present character and condition of the leading European nations—even our own, the best of them all; and as for the rest of the world——

Gaius. Now for one of your Jeremiads!

Hermas. Neither my Jeremiads nor your Pin-darics, Gaius, will alter the true condition of the

world, or reverse its destiny. You may sing your songs of triumph, as though the victory were all but won, and Satan all but dethroned by your hands; but this condition and destiny will nevertheless remain to be discovered in the one only book which reveals them. But this authority has hitherto gone for so little as to amount to next to nothing. The world laughs at it, and the church neglects it. The one indulges in dreams of its self-progression in social and political regeneration; the other, of its conversion by her means and present agencies. The Scripture countenances neither view; but by an overwhelming mass of evidence to be drawn from the prophets, from David to John, including our Saviour himself, testifies to its progress in wars, violence, anarchy, infidelity, and various forms of antichristianism, till ripe for judgment, and arrested in its course by the coming of the Lord in person. And of this state of the world, and of the near approach of his coming, he has condescended to give signs which all may read, and which all who read may, if they please, understand; that is, if, discarding prejudice and party spirit, they seek honestly to do so with prayer for illumination from the Father of lights. But I cannot now go far into this subject; even supposing you prepared for it, which you obviously are not: but would rather

press on your attention, as a preliminary truth, the certainty, suddenness, unexpectedness, and probable nearness of the coming of the Lord, as derivable from his own words. If the various predictions relating to this coming, so strangely wrested from their true position and meaning, and applied to events with which, on examination, they are found to have no agreement, can be taken out of the hands which have thus misused them, and restored to their rightful place and intent, no trifling step will have been gained. But in the similes used by our Lord to illustrate his coming to which I have particularly referred, namely, the lightning and the flood, you will recollect that, with the latter, was associated a comparison of the state of the world at the time of that coming, with its state at the time of the flood. And if the similes referred to have no counterpart in the siege of Jerusalem, so this comparison is altogether at variance with the expectation of a pre-advent millennium, and dissipates at once the fond dreams of the world's regeneration by philosophers, politicians, and missionaries before the second advent. Shut not your eyes to the words as they are written, nor trifle with them. Recollect, that it is the Lord himself who says, that as the world was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the time of his second coming: that is, at the best, with a

comparative few who shall be found to have taken shelter in the ark of refuge—his church.

Gaius. But may I not do as well now, and hope to do as well at last, without being perpetually under this terrible expectation?

Hermas. No, Gaius. I answer without hesitation, no. You could not live the life of carelessness and dissipation which you know you do if you did; and the very word you have used in speaking of this expectation of the advent shows how little prepared you are for it. Come when it will, it will be terrible, Gaius, to the sinner only.

Gaius. But will not looking for death do as well as looking for the second advent? I know very well I must meet this sooner or later.

Hermas. And so do all men, and live all the while as if there were no such thing near or around them.

Gaius. How, then, do you mean to show that the one expectation will do more than the other?

Hermas. By no elaborate disquisition; but simply upon principles so common to our nature, and so intelligible, that I anticipate a ready acquiescence in them even from you. The very fact of death being common deprives it of its impressiveness, and that in proportion as it is common. The soldier, the undertaker, and the gravedigger, for instance, are, perhaps, generally

speaking, amongst those who think least of the great enemy whose conquests they are so constantly called to witness. Our apprehensions are so blunted by familiarity, and we are so much in the habit of referring the deaths of others which we hear or read of to circumstances not perhaps our own, to causes, from at least any imminent danger to which we may think ourselves exempt, or to accidents to which we are not, nor likely to be, exposed—that we unconsciously, but surely, acquire a habit of passing them by without a personal application. You read of a man who has fallen into a river and been drowned. But you do not expect to fall into a river; and so his fate is as an event which does not concern you. Just so, you read of the young, who have died of consumption; of the middle-aged or elderly, who have died of apoplexy; of the old, who have died because they were old; and of the physician, or the clergyman, who has fallen a victim to contagious disease. But you are neither consumptive, nor apoplectic, nor old, nor called to expose yourself to the fevers of the poor; and so their case is not made your own. You meet, perhaps, every day in the street, or every week at church, the same person you have met for twenty or forty years, and you transfer his permanence to yourself. In the latter instance, on some particular occasion,

the very sermon is, perhaps, on death: but the figure of an old woman in the aisle, or a pale face in an adjoining pew, suggests to you the more appropriate illustration of the preacher's subject; and, with the erect bearing of vigorous manhood, you walk out of that church, and leave it and death behind you. Nay, the very mode by which modern society has made provision to meet some of the temporal evils of death, lends its aid to the delusion. You, now, Gaius, with a life worth, I dare say, thirty years' purchase in any office in England, what can homilies on death have to do with you?

Gaius. You have hit the nail closer on the head than you were, perhaps, aware of. I have just made a small investment in a tontine; to derive any benefit from which, I am told, I shall probably have to wait just that time. But, if any man may feel strong in life, I think I may. My father is eighty, and my grandfather died at eighty-two, from a fall down some unfinished steps in a new house that he was building; and the surgeons, on a *post-mortem* examination of his body, declared that there was nothing to prevent his living ten years longer.

Hermas. And so *you* presume, and very naturally, according to the false conclusions of fallen humanity, that you, too, may reckon upon eighty or ninety years, and may keep death and his

monitors at a distance for years to come. You are, perhaps, ready to say, that the expectation of the coming of Christ, near as it may be, being yet uncertain as to its time, would have no more effect than the equally uncertain period of death; and, with respect to the mass of the depraved and the thoughtless, you are, probably, right,—those who are determined to learn nothing from God or man, from Scripture or experience: though it would be presumptuous to say, even here, that a means of warning and alarm of God's own appointment, which it undoubtedly is, should fail to take effect on some of the number, with whom all others had failed; while, with a class less depraved and more thoughtful, the solemn and untried appeal might be expected to have a much more extensive effect,—while, again, these effects on those who are already looking forward to this glorious coming, though through a long vista of ages, with the gloomy portal of death in the foreground, would be most delightful. The possibility of having the cheering hope, even of an apostle, verified in themselves—of being clothed upon, rather than unclothed; of escaping the dire penalty of sin, which has had (with two only exceptions, that we are acquainted with,) to be paid by every child of Adam; of being taken from the evil to come; and of meeting Him whom they have desired to

serve and long above all things to see, and who they know, unworthy as they are, and defective as their services have been, will bring his reward with him; to live under the animating expectation that their hopes may be realised any year, any month, any day; would, indeed, be life, and joy, and victory,—support in trial, strength in temptation, consolation in trouble, and encouragement in work,—which the hope of heaven, seen through the dark and dismal valley of the shadow of death, has not the same power to impart.

Gaius. Well, you have given me something to think of, at any rate; which, I suppose, is as much as you expect to be said by one so little accustomed to think for himself. But, before we part, will you allow me to ask you two questions? Do you wish me to understand, in the comparison which you have drawn——

Hermas. Pardon me: it is not *I* who have drawn it.

Gaius. Well, then: in the comparison which you have adduced, do you mean me to understand that I am to consider you as implying that the sin of Christians in the present day, in not listening to the warnings of the coming of Christ, is as great as that of the antediluvians in not listening to the warnings of Noah; and that the state of the world is as bad now as it was then?

Hermas. I will endeavour, in a few words, to reply to both parts of your question; premising one observation, common to them both: guilt is relative, and is in all cases to be measured by the capacity and the means of knowledge of the moral agent. With respect to the first—the guilt of the antediluvians in despising the warnings of Noah—it is first to be observed, that their guilt lay rather in refusing to listen to him as a reprover of wickedness and a preacher of righteousness, than as a prophet; of his warnings of the wrath to come on them as sinners, rather than of his prediction of the Flood. So the sin of the present generation, in Christian countries,—our own, for instance, as the most favoured,—consists, like that of the antediluvians, more in turning a deaf ear to the preachers of righteousness, their warnings to flee from the wrath to come on both the living and the dead, and their invitations to seek shelter in the Gospel ark of refuge, than in slighting the predictions of the coming of the Lord and the judgments to fall on the living. Nevertheless, though the lesser guilt is in both cases overshadowed by the greater, it is not to be contended that there is none. Noah had credentials which entitled his predictions to as much respect as his preaching; and the prophecies which come to us respecting the coming of the Lord (and here we

arrive at the standard of comparison alluded to above), come not only with the signet of inspiration impressed on them, but with marks, if we will attend to them, by which we may discover their special application to *us*. The prophets, indeed, not only deliver their messages to us with equal credentials, but they also find us better prepared to receive them—with higher advantages from revelation, and from intellectual powers, than we have any reason to believe the antediluvians possessed. But, if the guilt of slighting the special warning be comparative, both with respect to the two particular generations, and also in its relation to the higher guilt of despising the law of righteousness and the message of mercy; let us not deceive ourselves with the notion, that, in neglecting the numerous prophecies of the coming of the Lord, the reiterated warnings and calls to watchfulness for that event, and the means afforded us of learning their special application to our own case, that there is *no* sin. Our folly, at least, is great, and our sin may be greater than we suspect.

Now then, for the second part of your question—the comparison of the present state of the world with that of the paulo-ante-diluvian one. You think that no such comparison can be made. But let us see. Where shall we begin? Suppose we look first at *Christian* lands, so called—lands,

whose princes and people have been the champions and the professed followers of Christ for 1800 years; and where, if any where, we should expect to find the people answering to their name, and to the working for so many centuries of the scheme expressly sent for the conversion of the world; or, at any rate, that we should be able, by the conquests it had made, and the comparative few who remained to complete the state in which all are expected to be found at the commencement of the millennium, to form some reasonable calculation from the number of years passed, and the rate of progress of conversion thence ascertained, how many remain of the few years which some sanguine calculators seem to reckon upon before the conversion of the whole. But what do we see? Look, first, at the nations earliest blessed with civilization as well as the Gospel—the countries of Southern or Papal Europe. Admitting that God has a few names even in Babylon, these countries form a part of the body of Antichrist, and as nations must be excluded in the mass; observing merely as to their social state, that superstition, infidelity, anarchy, revolution, and civil wars, seem to have adopted them as their chosen seats,—and with respect to the nations of Protestant Europe, the mask thrown over them by the fictitious name of Christian, our natural

predilections for everything Protestant, and the opinion which has grown up with us, that here must be a Christian people, and that these nations, at least, must be, in a great measure, what they profess to be, have all tended to deceive us. Where, indeed, are we to look for a realization of these fond opinions? In the neologian and pantheistic protestants of Germany? In the deadness, formalism, and exclusiveness of the churches of Sweden, Denmark, and Holland? Or in the mockery of every thing Christian in the mingled infidelity, socinianism, and Papal intolerance in the Protestant cantons of the once-favoured Switzerland? Whoever will take the pains to ascertain the true state of religion in these countries will soon become sensible of their great and almost universal declension. But listen for a moment to authentic reports of the actual state of one or two of these countries.

Of Sweden, the late Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. G. Scott, writes to the editors of "Evangelical Christendom" as follows:—"I regret to say that an experienced and influential friend in Stockholm, *a Swede*, who has the best opportunity for forming a judgment, writes me, under date October 10th, 1848:—"Disorder, lightness, sensuality, increase everywhere; things are *much worse* than when you were here; crime exceeds all limits; contempt for

Christianity makes great progress, and religious meetings can scarcely be protected by the civil power. God alone does so. The same spirit of anarchy and blindness which scourges the Southern continent reveals itself here, and appears as a punishment for sin, coming over all these nations.’” The social and religious condition of Germany seems even more deplorable. This statement may be confirmed from almost any authentic account taken at random; but the following short and graphic one, taken from a paper issued by the Conference of Evangelical Protestants, held at Wittemberg, in September, 1848, and attended by “above 500 brethren” from all parts of Germany, may be considered as giving a faithful representation of the present condition of that section of chiefly Protestant Christendom:—“The usual bonds of social life are broken, law has become powerless, and love is converted into hate. Exasperation prevails among the German races so nearly related to each other; property is insecure, and the poor, without labour and without bread, are left an easy prey to seducers and revolutionists. The great cities are an arena of party feuds and reckless factions, of ingratitude, perfidy, and even of assassination. It is as if the spirits of the abyss had ascended to seduce and destroy us.”*

* Evangelical Christendom for Dec., 1848.—A still

Take, again, Holland, in which the candle of the Reformation shone so long and so steadily; though now burning dimly, and threatened with being extinguished quite, in the mephitic atmosphere of Socinianism and Rationalism. At a meeting of Christian friends, held at Amsterdam, in October last, for consultation on the state of the Reformed Church, a resolution, of which the following is an extract, was passed:—"That, in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, injustice is wickedly done to the confession of the truths that are known to the Christian Church in general, and to the Reformed Church in particular; as the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and

more recent correspondent writes thus :—"Since November, our state in Prussia has been somewhat quieter; but the probability is still that we are going to be plunged fully into the depth; and we deserve it, for the want of religion in the minds of our people is enormous and appalling. You have no idea of the shocking influence exercised by the political movements in this respect. Our churches in Halle, with the exception of the little chapel of Mr. Ahlfield, stand almost empty on Sundays; even my congregation has extremely diminished. In the large city of Magdeburgh, you would not find in most of the churches, in the morning service, more than twenty or twenty-five hearers. As to the students, they proved excellent after the revolution; but during the winter semestre, their zeal has diminished, no new inquirers have been added, and we may expect to see even worse times."—*Letter from Dr. Tholuck to Sir C. E. Eardley, bart., in "Evangelical Christendom" for June.*

New Testament, the Trinity, original sin, satisfaction by the blood of the cross, justification by faith alone, regeneration, sanctification, and free grace;"—"That this injustice is undeniable, not only in the suffering, but in the obtruding, especially in preaching and public instruction, of doctrines like those which at present are advocated, especially in the Dutch Reformed Church; for instance: that the Bible is a human book, not the word of God, but in which the word of God must be sought; that the Son of God is not God, but a creature next to God; that the Holy Ghost is not a power as the Father and the Son; that to the salvation of sinners no satisfaction at all to God's vindictive righteousness was required; that the death of the Lord Jesus was only a manifestation of the greatness of sin, and a testimony of God's unconditioned love, and no suffering and death in our place; that to adore the Son as true God is idolatry; to see in his propitiating sacrifice the ransom of sin, *blood-theology*; to assert the infallibility of the apostolic writings, apostle-worship;" &c.

Such is the condition of Protestantism in the national churches of the leading Protestant divisions of continental Europe. Protestantism it may still be called, inasmuch as it is opposed to Popery. But all that once gave eminence and distinction to that honoured name has fled.

From countries where religion is supposed to have been restrained in its vital principles and onward propensities by the remains of superstition, and the fetters of state control, let us turn to one where priests have never ecclesiasticised it, and where princes and parliaments have never meddled with its independence—the boasted land of civil and religious liberty. Here we shall have an opportunity of seeing what the Gospel, left to its free course, in the hands of free agents, can do. Surely here we shall find one people, at least, brought under its softening and humanizing influences: holding up to the countries which have been denied their advantages a pattern of what they may be, and the means of attaining it. But what do we see? In surprise, we exclaim—Is it here that this example is to be sought? Here! where whips and chains, and prisons, and stripes, and scars, (fitly emblemed on the national banner,) loom strangely in bold relief from amongst the insignia of *Liberty*? Is it here! where man is bought and sold by his fellowmen at public marts, with other goods and chattels—where, amidst creeds which profess that the black man as well as the white is washed in the blood of Christ, he is flogged, tortured, and ground to powder, by wretches with the names of Christ and Liberty in their mouths:—where, even in the churches, his

default of the aristocracy of colour condemns him as unworthy to mingle with the race of nobler blood; thrusts him into a corner to worship alone, or with his fellow Pariah, and excludes him even from the table of the Lord till his betters have been served before him, as dogs are fed apart from their master's table? Is it this you call Christianity? Spare the name from prostitution to such a mockery of its meaning as this. To me it is nothing less than blasphemy against the sacred name by which they presume to call themselves, and an insult to our common humanity. I see you quail, and well you may.

Gaius. Why this is rather rough handling, Hermas. You knock away one of my main props, and wonder that I cannot, on the instant, recover my standing.

Hermas. I tremble too; but it is with mingled horror and indignation. The heart sickens at the thought that this is the condition of millions in one of the most vaunted of Christian lands in the nineteenth century of the preaching of the Gospel, and would faint altogether, if there were not some better and more speedy prospect of its termination than the continuance of the same means, with the same agencies, promises.

Shall we look to the heathen world?—heathen still, with comparatively few exceptions, as left by

the Apostles themselves? Here, indeed, are cheering scenes, and cheering prospects, for those who will understand them, and take the word of God, rather than their own sanguine temperaments and confidence in human means, as their guide. Many inroads have, since then, been made upon the dark places of the earth; but, as a counterpoise to this, if you will take a map, and cast your eye over that portion of the globe lying between the Adriatic and the Caspian, you have before you vast regions, equal to nearly the whole of Europe, once dotted thickly over with Christian churches, now obliterated from the map of even nominal Christendom—sunk in the profound ignorance and proud fanaticism of the Eastern imposture, or in trembling subservience to this, in the scarcely subordinate ignorance, and more debasing superstitions, of the Greek Church.

Gaius. But what of England? You have omitted it altogether, and would almost induce one to think you had done so by design, as not suiting your purpose.

Hermas. You judge wrongly. It will, perhaps, appear that my purpose is served as little by its omission as yours by its introduction. But the truth is, I reserved it purposely to the last. Measured by the standard intimated, England is, perhaps, nationally the most guilty of all the

nations. Here is, no doubt, the largest amount of true religion—of Christian principle and practice ; and, at the same time, the greatest aggregation of vice and immorality, and of national and individual disregard of the law of God, that was ever found in any nation in actual intermixture with, and in the perpetual presence of, so much of their opposites — a strange union of beauty and deformity, light and darkness, life and death ; presenting a similar anomaly in the moral world, to the association of some of earth's most beauteous scenes with pestilence and death, sometimes found in the natural. Look first at its numerous institutions for the relief of poverty, ignorance, and disease ; its Bible and Missionary societies ; and the number of places in which the true God is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Here are the lawns and streams and blue hills of the sun-lit landscape. But look again, and you will perceive this fair scene marred by deadly plants, and more deadly animals : while over all, and intermingled with all, floats an atmosphere charged with the seeds of pestilence and death. Look at its gin palaces, erected to lure their thousands to destruction of body and soul, and permitted by the Legislature for the sake of the large returns they bring to the Revenue ; and its beer shops (encouraged for the same reason), strewed in never-

ending succession along the path of the labouring man, in town and country; as if on purpose to multiply the points of temptation, and to leave him without a chance of escaping ultimate abandonment to his besetting sin. Look again at its statistics of crime, of prostitution, and of ignorance;* to say nothing of the countless forms and vast extent of vice, stealthy and silent, which never come to the light, concealed by the arts of successful villany, or gilded over with the refinements of rank and wealth, and the specious nomenclature of a false morality. Look at its intense and almost universal worship of Mammon; on whose altar—by toil, by competition, by eager haste and over-tasked energies, by disappointment, by heart-achings and

* Some sanguine persons, both in politics and religion, whose theories of the world's political and moral progression, require, like other theories, some show of proof for their support, seize hold, from time to time, of some local or isolated criminal statistics which appear to favour them. But the real facts are lamentably otherwise, especially as regards crimes of violence, and juvenile and female crime. Murder—a crime once known almost anywhere rather than in England, and reflecting, by its comparative frequency in other countries, honour both on our laws and national character—has come to require a weekly, and sometimes a daily, place in our journals. Murder and manslaughter, to use the words of the *John Bull* newspaper, have become the staple crimes of England. And, as to the increase of juvenile and female crime (a gloomy prospect for the coming generation), the reader is referred to Mr. Worsley's Prize Essay on Juvenile Depravity.

heart-breakings, by slow or sudden suicide—tens of thousands are sacrificed yearly. Look further at one of its most gigantic, and gigantic as it is, yet growing sins—Sabbath desecration; increased a hundred fold since the introduction of steam carriage.* And look, lastly (though this melancholy catalogue admits of much greater extension), at the state of the churches—the spiritual declension, and the growth of worldliness, more or less, in all: hastened onwards, in the National Church, by its bondage to the State (a widely different thing from a beneficial alliance), and its deep infection with Romanism; and, in the Dissenting churches, by sectarian and political strife and agitation.

And, now, if we bring this state of the earth, even of its best parts, to the standard proposed—that to be formed from the progress of time and events, and the incalculable advances in light and knowledge, and especially from the fact, that that great event, which the antediluvians looked dimly forwards to through more than two thousand years,

* How does it add to the already fearful magnitude of national guilt in this respect, and the alarm which the Christian politician may justly entertain with regard to the future, that the second reading of Mr. Locke's Bill, for a compulsory provision for Sunday travelling, was lost by a majority of only nine! And what a blot is it on *Liberalism*, so-called, that its principal friends are found amongst the promoters of this act of disregard of the law of God, and of tyranny over the rights of conscience!

has become to us a subject of historic and inspired record, and is looked back upon for nearly the same number of years—when we form our estimate of the world's guilt by this standard, it is impossible to conceive what may be its amount as accumulated on the present generation, especially in its most favoured parts—the so-called Christian nations.

You may recollect that the guilt of Capernaum was declared by our Saviour to be greater than that of proverbially the most guilty city on record, and why? Not for any parallel crimes: not that it fell in its morals or in its religious observances below the ordinary standard of other Jewish cities, and which, formal and defective as they were, were yet far before those of the heathen world generally; but because it rejected the light when brought to it.

And let it not be forgotten, that at the time Jerusalem was visited by judgments more terrible than ever fell on any other city, it was the only capital city amongst the nations in which the worship of the true God was openly maintained. But this could not save it. It was because it knew not the time of its visitation—for its Pharisaism, hypocrisy, blindness, and rejection of the promised Messiah; who daily stood in its midst working miracles which none else could perform, and in whose coming were exactly fulfilled all the predic-

tions relating to his lineage and the time and place of his birth, &c. Here was not only the true religion, but a more general and punctual though formal performance of its outward duties, than of those of any other religion by the inhabitants of any other city on earth. But this could not save it. The light came to it, and it preferred darkness rather than light: their promised King, known to the few who had watched the signs of the times and were waiting for his coming, its people rejected and put to death; and, therefore, were they given up to punishment till then unexampled. We have Him not, it is true, thus before our eyes; but we have Him with equal credentials daily set forth amongst us in his word and ordinances. And although he has been thus set forth to us and to the rest of Protestant Europe for three centuries—By how many is he absolutely rejected? By how many more virtually so? By how large a proportion of professors are the purifying and self-denying principles of the Gospel superseded by a mass of Pharisaism, selfishness, and hypocrisy? And in what a comparative few do these principles really live and show themselves by their fruits? How great may be the amount of guilt thus accumulated, and still accumulating, none can tell. Nothing, at any rate, in such a view of the case, can less become us than the self-complacency, adulation,

and boasted security, national, social, and individual, in which some are in the habit of indulging.

Gaius. What, then, do you mean to do with the world, and what do you make of the prophecies which declare that it *shall* be converted?

Hermas. Two very natural questions for one labouring under your prejudices to ask. In reply, then, I wish you to understand that I, and all who are with me, not only have the same faith in these prophecies, and in the entire conversion of the world as their fulfilment, which you have; but that we look for this consummation with a certainty, distinctness, and proximity, which no faith resting only on the experience of the past or on present reports can reach to. A fair comparison of the state of the world as it is now, with its state 300 or 1200 years ago, must force on the reluctant conviction of the most sanguine, that by the same means and at the same rate of progress, hundreds, nay thousands, of years may yet pass before the world may become nominally, much more truly converted to Christ. When now, at the end of 1800 years, I look on the vast regions, and the almost countless millions, yet immersed in heathen darkness, and the nations and the millions of semi-heathen Christians, doomed, for any date I have yet to go upon, to linger on as many centuries more, under the dominion, not of Christ,

but of his antagonist, the god of this world, I should sit down in absolute despair if I had not some better ground of hope to look to than your creed has yet admitted. For want of this foundation, and sent to his work with the Scriptural statement concealed from him—that he is called to labour under a dispensation not of universal conversion of the nations, but of a gathering out of them till the number of the elect is complete, the poor missionary meets with disappointments and discouragements, and not seldom sinks into an early grave, because his labours have been great and his converts few: not perceiving that in that few the promises are fulfilled, or more than fulfilled, in his particular case.

Not, however, to dwell on a part of the subject which is only incidental, the principal questions submitted to our consideration as the result of the whole, and to which it was my chief design to draw your attention in the present conversation, are—Whether the coming of the Lord is near or remote? and, consequently, whether we are to live in expectation of it, or in forgetfulness or indifference respecting it? Whether it is to precede or to follow the Millennium? and, consequently, whether the world is to be converted first or afterwards? In other words—Which of the two are to be received as truth—the word of the

Lord, which declares that the world at his coming shall resemble that when overtaken by the Flood, and Sodom when overwhelmed with fire;—or the word of man, which says, that at the time of that event it shall resemble neither, but shall be converted in all its tribes, and in the enjoyment of millennial peace and righteousness: when “a sea of bliss unbounded” shall “spread o’er earth from pole to pole,” and when, and not till then, “shall come the great Messiah”?*

I need not attempt to demonstrate to you that the two doctrines are diametrically opposed to each other; that they cannot consist together, and that, consequently, one or the other must be given up? Which is it to be?

Gaius. After taking so much pains with me, I suppose I ought to be ready with a prompt answer to your question; and I hope you will not think me either stupid or stubborn if I am not.

Hermas. Do not fear; I must accuse myself if I did. My prejudices—and, by consequence, my difficulties—were as great as yours, till the very pressure of the difficulties themselves drove me to further inquiries; and there is no more doubt in your case than in mine, that the same course will lead to the same result. I will only add, that the evidence I have adduced being that

* Jubilee Hymn, by the Rev. Dr. Raffles.

of one witness only, gives but a small part of the whole case. It is true, that it is that of the principal witness, and can stand alone, complete and decisive. But the further evidence given, both by Himself, and by other witnesses inspired by Himself, is so copious and diversified that I venture to predict, that, with a little less confidence in self, and a little more dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, your reluctance to receive the great truth of the premillennial advent, will give place to astonishment that you should have been blind to it so long.

APPENDIX.



IN an article in a recent number of the *British Quarterly Review*, on "Modern Millenarianism," while it has expended above sixty pages in treating, in the customary way, and with considerable skill—the expectations of the Jews, their restoration, the covenant, the kingdom of Christ, the resurrection, the character and standing of those in the flesh during the Millennium, the times and seasons, &c.; it has left untouched the great question of the premillennial advent—that very one on which all that is most interesting, and all that is practical, in the system termed Millenarianism, but which would be more properly designated PREMILLENNIANISM, hangs,—and without a right judgment in which all the others are little worth.

In the question which only comes second to the preceding,—that which relates to the Jewish restoration,—the reviewer, speaking of the millenarian interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies, viz., that the literal promises to the literal

Israel, couched as they are in terms the most exact, circumstantial, and defined, that language admits of, can be taken in no other sense than that which such language universally requires, asks, "Where, then, is the destiny of the Church disclosed?" We might as well ask, why our Lord, in the prayer which he gave to his disciples, made no mention of an atonement, nor gave them any instructions to come to the Father by Him? We may, indeed, ask in turn, what kind of prophecies we should expect to find respecting the Christian church, before its Head was fully made known?—for so obscurely was He revealed in these prophecies in his sacrificial and mediatorial character, that even his chosen disciples understood him not, till their eyes were miraculously opened. Retaining, however, our principle of interpretation in regard to these prophecies, there are still abundant allusions to the glories of the universal Church of the latter days, embracing, as is expressly declared, the Gentile nations; but, in every instance, this consummation is, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, put in conjunction with the previous restoration and conversion of Israel. For instance, does Isaiah (ch. xi.) prophecy that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"?—It shall be in that day when both "the

outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah" shall be gathered together from the four corners of the earth. Is it said in the same prophet (ch. xlix.), in relation to the Messiah, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth"?—It is in antithetical juxtaposition with the raising up the tribes of Jacob, and restoring the preserved of Israel. Does God, by Jeremiah (ch. xxxi.), announce to the houses of Israel and Judah, that He will make a new covenant with them, under which He will write his law in their hearts, and cause them to know Him, from the least of them to the greatest? It is in immediate conjunction with the promise of their re-establishment in their cities and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, "never to be plucked up or thrown down any more."

But the most singular fact connected with this subject in the article in question, is this:—The reviewer not only reads without conviction the reiterated and graphic predictions of the restoration of the Jews, conveyed in every form of language which can give distinctness and certainty to these remarkable prophecies, but can indulge in a calm and eloquent review of their history and present state; can even write as follows:—"Israel's

problem does not lie in isolated facts, be they few or many. It consists in themselves, their existence. It is the problem of a people dispersed throughout the nations for centuries, and remaining unab-sorbed; a people surviving for nearly two thousand years the loss of their national territory, and with it the destruction of their national polity, and the essentials of their national religion. Such is Israel's condition, not merely as it was foretold in the sacred books of the people, a fact no scepticism can discredit; but as it lies exposed throughout the world to all who can compare what they themselves behold with the testimonies of general history. Is this a problem any infidel philosopher can solve?" After all this, the writer can fall back on (as far as the poor Jew is concerned) the cold theology of his school, and leave the great problem as he finds it—a problem still: accepts, and argues from, the prophecies which foretell this marvellous dispersion and protracted existence, but deliberately rejects those which proclaim the only issue to this standing miracle which can reach its demands and solve the problem—the national reunion of the same people. One might be almost tempted to imagine that in this hasty rhetorical sketch the writer was displaying his skill in experimenting how far it is possible, like the moth with

the candle, to play round an obnoxious truth without falling into it.

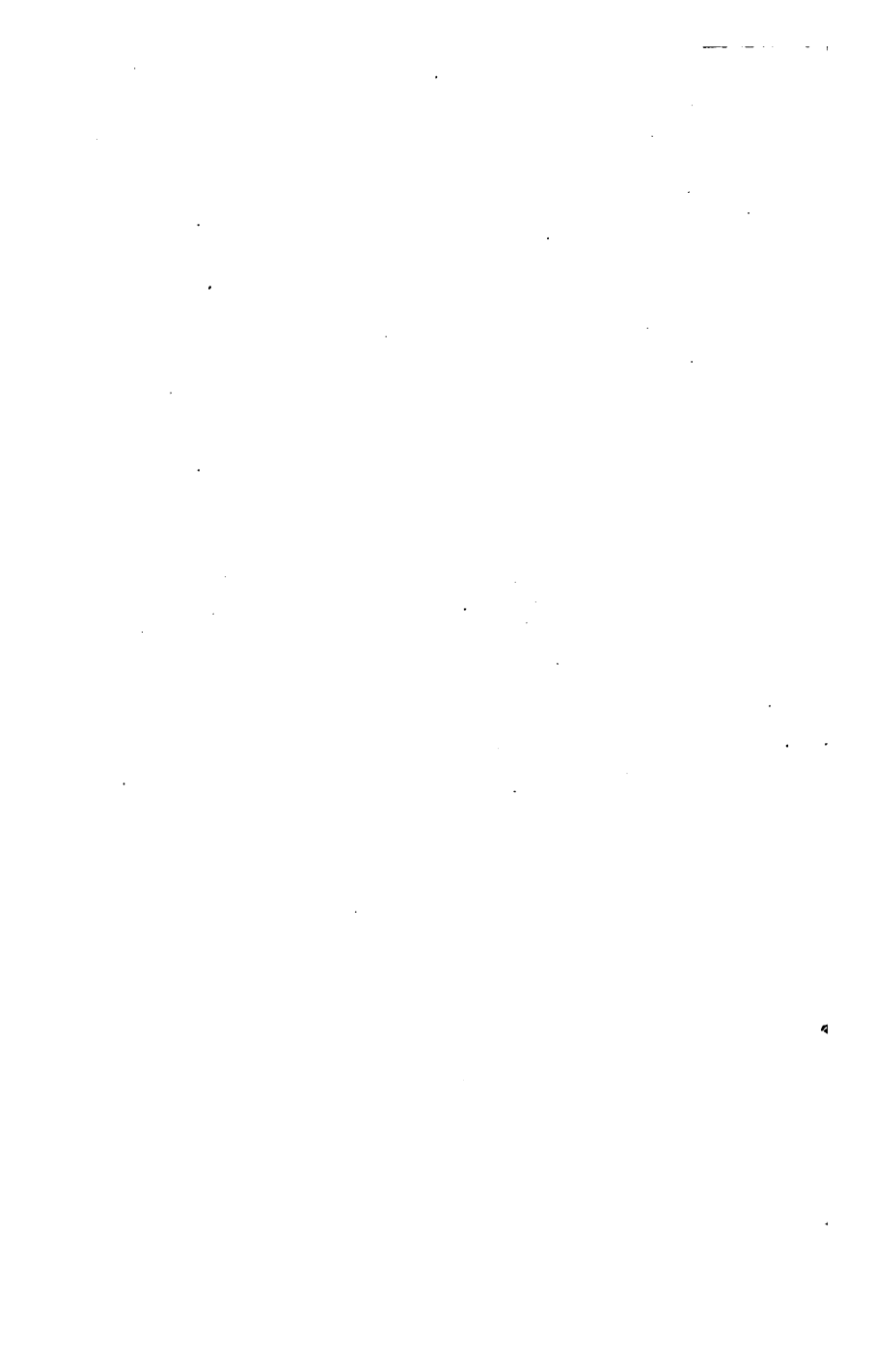
Again. In an article in a previous number of the same journal, on the Life and Writings of Spinoza, the reviewer, quoting Spinoza's theory respecting the dispersion of the Jews, viz., "that by the adoption of exclusive religious rites they made themselves odious to all other nations," supposes a person replying to him by asking him—"Well: but what do you do with the prophecies?" What, indeed! Spinoza, truly, took the difficulty at a leap and cleared it, by making Ezra to be the author of the Pentateuch, and the prophetic books in general merely fragments collected from all quarters. This, of course, is a flight beyond the reach of an orthodox commentator. But Spinoza's theory of the dispersion is as good as any other brought to explain the perpetual miracle, which excludes the prophecies which foretell the national restoration of the same people. Marvellous, indeed, it is, that any man can ask such a question as the one above, and stop short with its application to one half of a prophecy or set of prophecies, (*i. e.*, taking the reviewer's position in a journal practically doing this,) should read one half of a passage denouncing dispersion and other judgments on the Jews, and give to that yet unhappy

people the benefit of their literal application, and while reading on, in language exactly similar, in terms equally precise, circumstantial and local, and, indeed, in many instances far more so, should draw back and refuse him the other half. The infirmities of human judgment, bound in the trammels of theological systems and educational prejudice, can alone explain such a phenomenon; and while in such a mode of handling the sacred text, an example is given of expository license which Spinoza himself might rejoice in—our efforts at convincing the Jew by arguments drawn from his own Scriptures must be expected to be nugatory.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that these remarks make no pretension to what is commonly called a “notice” of the review referred to. Occasion has simply been taken from it to point at the singular omission in an elaborate article on “Modern Millenarianism,” of what is, in fact, its primary feature, and which constitutes the principal subject of the preceding treatise—the pre-millennial advent; and also to direct the reader’s attention, in the mode of dealing with another fundamental article in millenarian belief—the restoration of the Jews, to what extent prophecy may be sported with, and the rules of criticism,

and the laws of language, set at nought at the bidding of system or prejudice, and how possible it is, in the use of an unguarded scheme of interpretation, to discern in the eye of the Jew or the Neologian, the beam which is but the reflection of the one in our own.

THE END.



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